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THE HUMAN SOUL IN THE MYTHS OF PLATO

II. THE CHOICE AND DESCENT OF THE SOUL *

“ The descent of the soul into body separates it from divine Souls, from whom it is filled with intelligence, power, and purity, and conjoins it with generation and nature and material things, from which it partakes of oblivion, aberration, and ignorance. For, in its descent multiform activities and various vestments become associated with it, which draw it down into a mortal composition and darken its vision of Real Being”—*Proclus on First Alcibiades*.

“ It is requisite, however, to inquire why souls fall into bodies. And we may reply, with Proclus—Because they wish to imitate the providential energies of the Gods, and on this account fall into generation, and leave the contemplation of true being: for, as Divine perfection is two-fold, one kind being intellectual, and the other providential, and one consisting in an abiding energy, and the other in motion, hence souls imitate the prolific, intellectual, and immutable energy of the Gods by contemplation, but their providential and motive characteristic through a life conversant with generation.

As the intelligence, too, of the human soul is partial, so likewise is her providence; but being partial it associates with a partial body. But still further, the descent of the soul contributes to the perfection of the universe; for it is necessary that there should not only be immortal and intellectual beings, such as are the perpetual attendants of the Gods, nor yet mortal and irrational animals only, such as are the last progeny of the Demiurgus of the universe, but likewise such as subsist between these and which are by no means immortal (i.e., as regards their bodily nature) but are capable of participating in reason and intellect.

* For the first article of this series “ The Nature of the Soul ” see previous issue, No. 32.

Should it be again asked; Why, therefore, are partial souls descending into generation filled with such material perturbation, and such numerous evils? We reply that this takes place through the inclination of their free will; through their vehement familiarity with body; through their sympathy with the image of soul, or that divisible life which is distributed about body; through their abundant mutation from an intelligible to a sensible nature, and from a quiet energy to one entirely conversant with motion; and through a disordered condition of being, naturally arising from the composition of dissimilar natures, viz., of the immortal and the mortal, of the intellectual and that which is deprived of intellect, of the indivisible and that which is endued with interval. For all these become the cause to the soul of mighty tumult and labour in the realms of generation; since we pursue a flying mockery which is for ever in motion. And the soul, indeed, by verging to a material life, kindles a light in her dark tenement the body, but she herself becomes situated in obscurity; and by giving life to the body she destroys herself and her own intellect in so far as these are capable of receiving destruction. For thus the mortal nature participates of intellect, but the intellectual part of death, and the whole becomes a prodigy, as Plato beautifully observes in his *Laws*, composed of the mortal and the immortal, of the intellect and that which is deprived of intellect. For this physical law which binds the soul to the body, is the death of (or the dying to) the immortal life, but is the cause of vivification to the mortal body.

—*Thomas Taylor's Notes on Timaeus*

The descent of the soul is not unnatural, for it is only by proceeding, in a mystical sense, from the ONE that she can become fully self-gnostic and self-conscious, can come to know her relation to the One and to the All, and can take her true place in the fulfilment of the Great Purpose by lifting up nature to supernature through the processes of art, in its real and widest sense.

The soul possesses an essence peculiar to itself; a power or potentiality characteristic of the principles above itself; and an energy or activity through which it unfolds its latent capacity and becomes identified with that which is below as well as above itself. The soul has also the divine gift of free

will and hence there are unlimited directions in which it may direct its activities. But since all action necessitates something to act upon, it is necessary for the soul to be associated with matter. Hence its descent into a physical body. The soul is at first bewildered and perplexed by its immersion in matter, but as soon as it realizes and makes actual its own inherent powers, by identifying itself with that which is above and not that which is below, it becomes actually and not merely potentially prepotent over matter and a lord of Nature.

Thus there is both a 'descent' and a 'fall' of the soul. The descent is perfectly natural and is the outcome of the soul's inherent impulse to manifest, and to actualize her potential capacities. As long as the soul remains in the subjective realms she has nothing material to act upon and therefore she must, as Proclus mystically expresses it, be sown like a divine seed in matter in order that she may exercise her powers by overcoming its limitations. This descent however does not imply sin, because so long as the soul preserves the memory of her real home she may act, even while dwelling in a physical body, in conformity with the Divine Will, for she preserves within herself "a vestige of the ONE." When however, through a too vehement attachment to matter she forgets her divine origin, and identifies herself wholly with the body, she sins by acting contrary to the Divine Law and suffers in consequence. This suffering itself however is of a purificatory and remedial nature, for by its agency the soul is cleansed of her impurities and led at length to seek her own true happiness.

"The Chaldean Oracles make the soul descend often into the world either through losing her wings or through the Will of the Father."—*Proclus*.

The souls that descend through losing their wings are those that are not yet perfected and cannot therefore sustain the flight to the Intelligible. Those that descend through the Will of the Father are those great souls who descend to earth in order to teach and uplift their fellow-beings.

The determining factor in the soul's journeyings is therefore the choice of the soul herself. When such principles as Necessity and Destiny are spoken of in connection with the soul, this does not imply any fatalistic or deterministic conceptions, for Necessity itself is in a mystical sense inherent

in the soul, a mysterious principle which urges her both to come forth and to return, and through which she comes at length by her own free choice to the fulfilment of her eternal destiny.

The Vision of Er, with which the *Republic* ends, unfolds in highly poetic language the manner of the soul's choice; but there are also two other myths which, although not directly concerned with this subject, are important, for they deal with principles intimately related to it.

The first is the Myth of the *Politicus*. The subject of this dialogue is the nature of the True Statesman, the man who would be a perfect ruler of his people. Before determining his nature and defining his art, it is necessary to look at the archetype and pattern of which all human rulership is an imitation—the Kingship of God. In the Golden Age God ruled, not through the instrumentality of men but more directly, for the Gods Themselves were His representatives upon earth and lived among men as Kings. It is with this Golden Age that the myth, which is told by the Eleatic Guest, is concerned.

The Universe, says the stranger, has two cycles, in one of which it is guided by God Himself and revolves for a certain period in one direction, but afterwards God ceases to propel it, so that the direction of its motion changes and it revolves for an equal period in a contrary direction. The reason for this is that it is impossible for that which has body to be without change of any kind, and this change, of the direction of its perfect circular motion, is of all changes the least.

The first period, when God was the Ruler and Shepherd of men, was the Golden Age, and even when the motion had changed, vestiges of the former perfection remained for some time until the growing discord among men impaired the beauty of the world.

The meaning of this myth becomes more profound when it is considered in relation to the soul. When, in a mystical sense, it is said that God lets go of the helm, this may be taken to mean that instead of directing all things immediately He entrusts the political governance of the world to human beings or human souls. As they are possessed of free will they may possibly forget their highest responsibility and rule for their personal advantage instead of the good of the whole. Just as the soul is given by God a little cosmos,

the body over which it must learn to rule so as to bring it to perfection, so, in one sense, mankind as a whole is given the gift of the universe. It is man's glorious destiny to cooperate with the Divine Power by bringing human society to perfection, so that its order reflects and exemplifies the Ideal Order.

But this is a work which man must do for himself. He must choose freely to know and to follow the Divine Will so that he may thereby bring the art of statesmanship and all other arts to perfection in the fulfilment of their highest purpose.

Wherefore, as the myth says, it behoves us to stand upon our own feet and ourselves put right the disorders of human society.

So, too, the Athenian Guest in the Myth of the Golden Age in the *Laws*: "Wherefore, as the myth tells us, we should make our life in every way as like as possible to the life when Cronus was King (i.e., in the Golden Age), and inasmuch as there is within us a principle of immortality we should obey this both publicly and privately in the administration of our households and our states, naming Law the application of the principles of Intellect (Nous)."

By this means will the Second Golden Age be brought into being when Cronus, Lord of the Eternal NOW, will reign on earth once more and mankind collectively will attain to perfect harmony and happiness in the fulfilment of its divine destiny.

But, it may be asked, if the soul, when dwelling in a body, may forget its divine nature and thereby cause discord and misery to itself and to others, what is the guarantee of ultimate fruition and attainment? If the soul's choice, moreover, is free, why should it not continually go on making wrong choices thereby involving itself more deeply in darkness and pain?

This mystery is unfolded in the Platonic myths which relate to Prometheus.

The Myth of the *Protagoras* deals with the gifts of God to living creatures. The Gods, having fashioned mortal creatures under the Earth, commanded Prometheus and Epimetheus to adorn them and distribute to each their various powers. Epimetheus distributed to the animal creation the various qualities necessary for their preservation and the perpetuation

of their species, but not being very wise he spent all his gifts on the animals so that nothing was left for man. "Wherefore Prometheus being at his wits' end to provide for the safety of man steals the craftsman's wisdom of Hephaestus and Athena together with fire—for without fire it is impossible either to get or to use it—and with this he endowed man."

But as even this was not sufficient for the preservation of the human race, Zeus commanded Hērmes to give to men justice and reverence for the ordering of states and as bonds of friendship. These gifts were by the command of Zeus distributed, not as the arts, one to one man and one to another, but to all. "For if but few shared in them as in the other arts, cities would not arise."

Prometheus (Forethought) symbolizes the inspective guardian of the descent of the rational nature of the soul into generation: Epimetheus (Afterthought) the guardian of the irrational nature of the soul.

The irrational nature or the irrational soul gains knowledge by percussion or contact with externalities, but the rational nature has the capacity to know truth prior to information derived from external sources. There are also, within the soul, above its rational nature, those gifts which the myth speaks of as given by Zeus Himself, the divine ideas or norms of Justice and Reverence which are innate in all souls.

Thus Epimetheus may be regarded as symbolizing the principle which enables the soul to preserve and care for her bodily nature. Epimetheus is "not very wise," because, if the care of the body and the satisfaction of its appetites is looked upon as the whole end of the soul's activities, she fails to fulfil her true purpose.

When the soul descends, Prometheus is symbolical of the power by which the soul chooses the purpose which she will fulfil. This choice is made, as the name Forethought indicates, prior to the soul's descent, when the soul sees things as they are and not as they appear to be, and consequently, howsoever far the soul may fall through drinking too deeply of the waters of Lethe and forgetting her own divine nature, this principle remains in the depths of her nature ready to recall her at length to the fulfilment of her own choice. But so long as the soul abandons herself to the false delights of transiency, it is as though Prometheus is chained to the rock with the vulture of unsatisfied longing

devouring his liver, for the real satisfaction of the soul's desires is not to be found in the realms of change.

It is Prometheus, too, who gives to the soul the art and skill by which she fulfils her purpose; for although the soul must escape from the bondage of that which is below, yet she has a duty towards it, since it is her mission to uplift and perfect it by contributing her share to the adornment of the universe through her activities in some form of art.

It is impossible, therefore, that the soul should ever forget permanently the purpose which she has set out to fulfil, for the chained giant of her own choice is within her and will ultimately be released.

The myth of Er, which Socrates tells to Glaucon and Adeimantus in the *Republic*, relates how Er, a Pamphylian, was taken up for dead after a battle, but on the twelfth day when he was already laid in the funeral pyre he came to life again and narrated the vision that he had seen.

It seemed that his soul journeyed together with a great company of others to an angelic region where there were two yawning chasms of the Earth near to each other, and above them two of Heaven. By these were seated Judges who, having judged the dead, bade the just take the right hand road leading upward; but the unjust they sent on the left hand road leading down. And from the other two mouths he beheld souls returning, some coming up from the Earth stained with squalor and dust, and others coming down from Heaven pure.

These all turned aside into a meadow and encamped there, and those that were friends greeted each other and related that which they had seen, those that had come from earth weeping in remembrance of that which they had seen and suffered in their thousand years' journey, and those that had come from Heaven telling of the wonderful and blessed sights which they had there beheld.

There he was told of the punishments of the wicked and saw how when those who had done unjustly essayed to go up into Heaven the mouth bellowed at them, whereupon they were caught, bound hand and foot, and cast down into Tartarus. But when the righteous began the ascent the Voice kept silence and allowed them to go up.

When both companies, those from Earth and those from Heaven, had remained for seven days in the meadow, on the

eighth it was necessary for them to depart. On the fourth day of their journey they came to a place where they could see a Light like a pillar, in colour like the rainbow but more pure, extended from above through the whole of Heaven and Earth. Going forward a day's journey they beheld, through the middle of the Light from Heaven, the extremities of its bonds extended. "For this Light is that which bindeth the Heaven together, and like the undergirding of a ship so it keeps the whole of the circumference united; and from the ends of it is extended the Spindle of Necessity by which all the heavenly revolutions are caused: its shaft and its hook are of adamant and its whorl compounded of this and of other substances."

The whorl contains within itself seven other whorls set concentrically one within the other, the seven inner circles moving in a contrary direction to the whole. (These whorls symbolize the sphere of the fixed stars, or the inerratic sphere, and those of the seven planets). Upon each circle is mounted a Siren uttering a note at one pitch, and the notes of all the eight together make one harmony.

On thrones near by are seated the Daughters of Necessity, the three Fates, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos. They are clothed in white with garlands on their heads and they chant to the harmony of the Sirens. Lachesis sings the past, Clotho the present, and Atropos the future. Clotho with her right hand ever and anon takes hold of, and helps to turn, the outer whorl of the spindle (or the circle of the *same*). Atropos with her left hand turns the inner whorls (the circle of the *different*), and Lachesis with first her right and then her left hand turns outer and inner alternately.

"Now he said that when they had come thither they must go straightway to Lachesis, and that a certain Prophet first ranged them in order and then, taking from the lap of Lachesis lots and examples of lives, ascended a certain lofty platform and said:

'The word of the Virgin Lachesis, Daughter of Necessity: Souls of a day, behold the beginning of another period of mortal life that bringeth death. No Angel (daimon) shall obtain you by lot but ye yourselves shall choose your Angel.

Let him whose lot is first first choose the life in which he shall dwell through the might of Necessity. But no lord hath Virtue, and as a man honoureth or dishonoureth her so

shall he have more or less of her. Of the chooser is the cause, and God is guiltless.'

Having said this he threw the lots to all and each took up the lot which fell beside him except Er himself, for he was not permitted to do so. And when each had taken up his lot it was clear what number he had drawn. After this the prophet laid on the ground before them Examples of Lives, far more numerous than those who were present. These were of every conceivable kind, for there were lives of all kinds of animals and moreover of all conditions of men; for there were kingships among them, some of them lasting and others destroyed in the midst of their power and ending in poverty and exile and beggary. And there were lives of renowned men, some for their grace and beauty or their strength and powers, and others for their birth and the virtues of their ancestors, and in like manner lives of women. But no disposition of soul was among them, because of necessity a soul that has chosen a certain kind of life becomes changed accordingly. But all other conditions of life were there mixed together, with riches and poverty, sickness and health, and some midway between these.

There, it seems, my dear Glaucon (Socrates remarks before continuing the myth) is man's whole danger, and therefore we must above all things take care that each one of us, though he neglect other studies, may become a seeker and a learner of this one kind of knowledge, if haply he may be able to learn and discover who will make him able and wise, so that he may distinguish a good life from a bad one, and always and everywhere choose, to the extent of his power, the better, pondering all the things that have just now been said, both severally and in their total import in their relation to the goodness of a life, and so that he may know what good or evil will beauty, mingled with wealth or poverty, produce in a certain particular disposition of soul, and what noble or ignoble birth, the estate of private citizenship or that of a ruler, strength and weakness, quickness or slowness at learning and all such qualities, whether naturally pertaining to the soul or acquired, will effect when mingled one with another, to the end that, taking all these into consideration, he may be able to choose from among them, having regard to the nature of his soul, and may choose also between the worse and the better life, calling that the worse

which will lead her in the direction of becoming more unjust, but the better that which leads her to become more just, and letting all else go by. For we have seen that, both in life and in death, this is the greatest choice. Like adamant indeed must he have this conviction within him when he goes to the house of Hades, so that there, too, he may be unshaken by riches or any such hindrances, and may not fall into the life of a tyrant or some similar mishap and work many and irremediable misdeeds, but may know how to choose always of the middle life and avoid the extremes on either hand, both in this life so far as he is able and in all the life hereafter. For thus does man become most happy.

Moreover the messenger from the other world told further how the Prophet spoke thus:—‘ Even for him who comes last, if he choose with intellect (nous) there is a life which, if he live it bravely, is desirable and not evil. Neither let him who is first be careless in his choice nor let him who is last despair.’ He said that when the Prophet had spoken these words the one whose lot was first immediately ran forward and chose the greatest tyranny, and through his folly and greediness he chose without fully examining all that was contained in it, so that it escaped his notice that it was fated therein that he should devour his own children, and contained other evils also. But when he had examined it at his leisure he began to beat his breast and bewail his choice, not having heeded the admonitions of the Prophet. For he blamed not himself as the cause of his misfortunes, but ill-luck and evil spirits and every thing except himself. And he was one of those who had come from Heaven, who had lived in his former life in a well-ordered state and had been virtuous through custom without philosophy. He said, moreover, that not a few of those who were caught in such-like snares were among those coming from Heaven, for they were unexercised in trials. But the majority of those who came from the earth, as they had both themselves endured labours and beheld others enduring them, did not make their choice so hastily.

For this cause, and also because of the fall of the lot, an exchange of good and of evil occurs to the majority of the souls. For if a man should always, when he comes into this life, seek after wisdom with his whole heart, and the lot of his choice fall not among the last, it would seem, from what has been told us of that which happens there, that he will not only

have happiness here, but that the journey hence to that place and back hither again will not be subterranean and rough, but smooth and heavenly.

That spectacle was indeed, he said, worth beholding, how each of the souls chose its life. And it was a piteous sight, and laughable and wonderful, since for the most part they chose after the custom of their former life."

The myth then describes the devices of various souls, among whom was Ulysses, who, having drawn the last lot of all, went about for a long time seeking the quiet life of a private citizen and having found it lying about somewhere neglected by the rest, chose it joyfully and said he would have made the same choice if his lot had been the first.

"In like manner souls of beasts were changed into the souls of men and into other beasts, the unjust changing into wild beasts and the just into tame, and they were blended in every kind of mixture."

The soul of a man, says Thomas Taylor, never becomes the soul of a brute, though it may be bound to it and as it were carried in it by way of punishment. Plato here signifies that those souls which have been living in the animal part of their nature now begin to assert their real manhood, or that others who have been just through custom choose a life of sensual pleasures and descend to the plane of the animals.

"When therefore all the souls had chosen their lives according to their lots they went forward in order to Lachesis, and she sent with each the Angel (daimon) which the soul had chosen to be the guardian of his life and to fulfil that which he had chosen. And the Angel first of all conducts the soul to Clotho to ratify beneath her hand and by the whirl of the vortex of her spindle the destiny it had chosen in its allotted turn; and having passed from her presence brings it back to the loom of Atropos for her to make its destiny irrevocable.

Thence, he said, the soul went without turning back under the Throne of Necessity, and when it and all the others had come out through it they all journeyed through terrible heat which burned and stifled to the Plain of Lethe; which, he said, is bare of all trees and every green thing that the earth produces. There, as it was already evening, they encamped by the River Amelete, whose water no vessel can contain. Now it was necessary that all should drink a

certain measure of this water, but those that were not preserved by wisdom drank more than the measure; and as each drank so he forgot all. But when they were fallen asleep and midnight had come there was a peal of thunder and an earthquake, and they were suddenly carried upwards some in one direction and some in another, shooting like stars towards generation. But he himself was forbidden to drink of the water. And where and how he came into his body he did not know, but looking up suddenly he saw that it was dawn and he was lying on the pyre.

Thus, O Glaucon, the myth was preserved and has not perished, and it can preserve us, too, if we believe it, for so shall we have a good passage over the River of Lethe and shall not defile our souls.

This is my counsel to us: let us believe that the soul is immortal and is able to bear all evil and all good, and we shall always hold fast to the upward path and in every way practise justice with wisdom; that we may be dear both to each other and to the Gods, both while we remain here and when we receive the rewards of this pilgrimage like Olympic victors going about to gather their crowns, and both here and in that journey of a thousand years which we have described we shall fare well!"

Thus does Plato unfold in veiled language the manner of the choice and descent of the soul. The Goodness of Divine Providence decrees that the soul's original choice of life and purpose shall be made prior to her descent into generation, when she is able to see in a manner analogous to Divine Foresight, to know as Divine Fore-knowledge knows, and to fore-reach even as Divine Power fore-reaches. The choice of the soul is irrevocably fixed by Divine Necessity through the aid of the Fates, who connect the soul with the body and who are, as it were, the objective aspects of Divine Providence whereby the Law is carried into effect. Her subsequent choices are qualified by the extent to which she has unfolded her faculties and become self-gnostic. If, while in the realms of objectivity, she does not exercise her elective power perfectly in accord with the Divine Will, in which alone is Absolute Freedom, then the soul falls under the dominion of Fate and suffers accordingly.

Yet in a mystical sense both Necessity and the Fates are within the soul, for she makes her own joy and her own sorrow, forges her own fetters, and breaks them again when she attains to liberation from the bondage of matter.

Wherefore "it behoves man to live the life of Intellect (Nous) and of the Gods, since this alone gives unfettered power to the soul, liberates it from the bonds of Necessity, and causes it to live not merely a human but a divine life and one naturally full of Divine Good."

—*Iamblichus*

(To be continued)

SEED THOUGHTS

The Secret of Knowledge and Power

The heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works, and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers.

—*R. W. Emerson*

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Art and Religion

How can the arts overcome the slow dying of mens' hearts that we call the progress of the world, and lay their hands upon mens' heart-strings again, without becoming the garment of religion as in old times?

—*W. B. Yeats*

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Beauty and Virtue

Do you not understand that only he who perceives Beauty with the eye of his soul can bring forth veritable virtue and not its image? For it is not the image but the truth that he grasps. And he that brings forth and fosters veritable virtue will be the beloved of the Gods; and he, if any of the sons of man, will become immortal.

—*Plato*

* * *

Vision

The vision of the mind begins to see clear where the vision of the eye has begun to wax dim.

—*ibid.*

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Good Manners

Think that thou shouldst conduct thyself in life as at a feast. Is some dish brought to thee? Then put forth thy hand and help thyself in seemly fashion. Doth it pass thee by? Then hold it not back. Hath it not yet come? Then do not reach out for it at a distance, but wait till it is at thine hand. And thus doing with regard to children and wife and governments and wealth, thou wilt be a worthy guest at the table of the Gods.

—*Epictetus*

THE TRIUMPH OF THE WISE MAN OVER FORTUNE

From Thomas Taylor's "Miscellanies"

II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE PLATONISTS

The Argument.—The Platonists make the felicity of their wise man consist in the contemplation of the world of eternal Ideas.

If felicity consisted merely in being immune from terrestrial hindrances there could be none on earth; but if in the possession of true good, which is intellectual, why does the soul pursue mundane goods and flee from mundane evils? The answer is that the pursuit of the former is not her principal aim, while flight from the latter also is the result of her secondary activities, since mundane things, in themselves, are necessary to the soul rather than good; for the true satisfaction of the soul's pure desires and aspiration is only to be found in the intelligible and spiritual world. Health, for example, is not pursued as an end until it is lost. Such things are desired by the wise man because their contraries may disturb to a certain extent his enjoyment of the true end of the soul, though they cannot take it away. But no adversities, not even the greatest, can seriously disturb him whose attention is directed to things beyond the reach of change. The intellectual light of the wise man will shine in his soul throughout all, and his pain will never cause him to be miserable. If his pain is great he will take all prudent steps to lessen it. But things of this sort do not appear so formidable to the virtuous man as to others, nor do they really affect the true man. Like a skilful wrestler he defeats Fortune's attempts to overcome his fortitude, knowing that it is not the true man but his exterior shadow that can weep at misfortune. Even if overcome with disease he retains his virtue like one in a deep sleep, nor is it necessary to his happiness that he should perceive himself to be virtuous or form an image of his own virtue, since intellect in its purest energies has no need of images, which belong to the lower imagination or phantasy.

The only way in which Fortune can affect him is to bring into play different virtues at different times. That which may be pronounced in great pain is pronounced not by the true man but by the external and shadowy man.

The chief good, therefore, comes from above, yet the wise man, although he does not identify himself with the body, will not neglect it; but will care for it as a musician for his lyre, which he uses to good purpose as long as possible; but when he can no longer make use of it he lays it aside and sings without it.

"But the Platonists, who justly considered the supreme felicity of man as consisting in the highest intellectual energy,

place their wise man on the summit of intellect, as on the top of a lofty citadel, situated beyond the reach of Fortune, and thence behold him contemplating the beatific visions of the luminous world of ideas, and from this survey deriving such an adamant strength of mind, as to be no more disturbed by calamity, than he who, gazing on the beauty of the heavens while standing on the margin of a river, is agitated when looking down he sees his image distorted in the fluctuating stream. But their doctrine on the subject is as follows:

If felicity consisted in a freedom from sickness and danger, and in never falling into great adversity, no one could be happy while things of such a contrary nature are dependent. But if felicity consists in the possession of true good, and this is intellectual, why is it requisite neglecting this, to inquire after other things which ought not to be connected with felicity?

For if it is proper that there should be some one end, and not many ends, it is necessary to pursue that alone which is the last and most excellent, and which the soul seeks after as something which may reside in the depths of its essence. But inquiry and will do not tend to the non-possession of this most excellent end; for reason does not choose a declination of things inconvenient from a principal desire of nature; but the principal appetite of the soul is directed to that which is best, with which, when present, it is filled, and enjoys perfect repose: and this is the life which the prime desire of the soul pursues. But that something of necessities should be present, is not the wish of the soul, if we consider the soul's desire properly, and not according to the abuse of words, since we alone think the presence of these requisite, because to the utmost of our ability we decline from (or avoid) everything evil. Not yet is this employment of declination to be principally desired; for it is far more desirable never to want it. The truth of this is sufficiently evident from necessities when present, such as health and a privation of pain; for which of these in a wonderful manner attracts the soul to itself? Since it is usual to neglect present ease and health, and to be unconscious of their possession. But such things as when present possess no gentle attractive power of converting the soul to themselves, cannot add anything to felicity; and it is reasonable to

believe, that things whose absence is caused by the presence of their offending contraries, are necessary rather than good. They are not therefore to be enumerated with the end, but while they are absent and their contraries succeed, the end of life is to be preserved perfect and entire. But it may be said, on what account does the wise man desire these to be present, and reject their contraries? Perhaps, not because they confer anything to felicity, but rather are, in some respects necessary to existence itself in the present state; while their contraries either lead to non-existence, or disturb by their presence the wise man's enjoyment of the end, at the same time not destroying that end; and because he who enjoys that which is best, desires to possess it alone, and not in conjunction with anything else. But, though anything else should occur, it will not take away the end, which is not absent while this is present. And, indeed, though something should happen to the wise man contrary to his desire, he will not on this account lose any part of his felicity; for if this were admitted, he must be daily changed, and fall from felicity; as when he loses a son, or suffers any loss in his domestic concerns: since there are innumerable accidents which take place contrary to the will, and which detract nothing from the true and invariable end of life. But it may be said that great adversities only lessen felicity. What, however, is there among human concerns so great, which will not be despised by him who betakes himself to things far more excellent and sublime, and is no longer dependent on such as are subordinate? Hence, in adverse circumstances, the wise man will consider that the nature of the universe is such, that he should bear things of this kind, and that it is requisite that he should follow the general order. If, too, he should be led captive, he knows that many in such a situation act better than they did before, and that it is in the power of those who are bound to make themselves free. But if they abide in captivity, they either continue for some particular reason, and in this case there is nothing truly grievous in their condition, or they abide without reason, and in this case it is not proper to be the cause of their own perturbation. Indeed the wise man is never oppressed with evil, through ignorance of his own concerns, nor changed by the fortunes of others whether prosperous or adverse; but when his pains are vehement, as far as is possible

to bear, he bears them; and when they are excessive they may cause him to be delirious; yet he will not be miserable in the midst of his greatest pains, but his intellectual light will assiduously shine in the penetralia of his soul, like a lamp secured in a watch-tower, which shines with unremitted splendour, though surrounded by stormy winds and raging seas. But what shall we say, if through the violence of pain, he is just ready to destroy himself? Indeed, if the pain is so vehemently extended, he will, if sensible, consult what is requisite to be done, for in these circumstances the freedom of the will is not taken away. At the same time it must be observed, that things of this kind do not appear to men excellent in virtue so dreadful as to others, nor yet reach to the inward and true man. If any one, however, objects that we are so formed by nature, that we ought to grieve for domestic misfortunes, he should understand that, in the first place all men are not so affected, and in the next place, that it is the business of virtue to reduce the common condition of nature to that which is better, and to something more honest than the decisions of the vulgar. But it is more honest to consider as things of no moment, all that appears grievous to our common nature. For the wise man is not as one rude and unskilful, but, like a strenuous wrestler, vigorously repels the strokes of fortune, endeavouring to throw his fortitude on the ground; since he knows that such things are displeasing to a common nature, but that to such a nature as his own they are not really grievous, but are terrible only as it were to boys. Hence he contemplates even the slaughter and destruction of cities, the rapine and prey, like the scenes in a theatre, as nothing more than certain transmutations, and alternate changes of figures; and weeping and distress everywhere as delusive and fictitious. For in the particular acts of human life, he knows it is not the interior soul and the true man, but the exterior shadow of the man alone, which laments and weeps, performing his part on the earth as in a more ample and extended scene, in which many shadows of souls and phantom scenes appear.

But what shall we say when the wise man is no longer himself, in consequence of being overwhelmed with disease? We reply, that if in such a state it is allowed he may retain his proper virtue like one in a deep sleep, what is there to prevent his being happy? Since no one would deprive him

of felicity in sleep, nor consider that interval of rest as any hindrance to the happiness of the whole of life. Again, if it is said, how can he be happy, though endued with virtue, while he does not perceive himself virtuous, nor energizes according to virtue? We reply, though a man does not perceive himself to be healthy, he may nevertheless be healthy: and again, he will not be less beautiful in his body, though not sensible of his beauty; and will a man be less wise if he does not perceive himself to be wise? But perhaps some one may say, that wisdom should be accompanied with sense and animadversion (i.e., the conscious direction of attention to it), for felicity is present with wisdom in energy. We reply, if this energy of wisdom was anything adventitious, there might be some weight in the assertion; but if the subsistence of wisdom is situated in a certain essence, or rather in essence itself, this essence will neither perish in him who is asleep or delirious, or is denied to be any longer conscious of his felicity. And indeed, the energy of this essence resides in the soul of such a one, and is an energy perpetually vigilant; for then the wise man, considered as wise, energizes, whether he be in a dormant state, or overwhelmed with infirmity. But an energy of this kind is not concealed from the whole itself, but rather from some particular part.

Perhaps, indeed, such an energy is concealed from us because it does not reach any sentient power; for to this purpose it should energize through sense as a medium. But why should not intellect energize, and soul about intellect, preceding all sense and animadversion? For it is requisite there should be some energy prior to animadversion, since the energy of intellect is the same with its essence. But animadversion appears to take place when the energy of intellect is reflected; and when that which energizes according to the life of the soul, rebounds, as it were, back again, like images in a smooth and polished mirror quietly situated, so as to reflect every form which its receptacle contains. For as in things of this kind, when the mirror is not present, or is not properly disposed, the energy from which the image was formed is indeed present, but the resemblance absent; so with respect to the soul, when it energizes in quiet, certain resemblances of thought and intellect beam on our imagination, like the images in the smooth and polished mirror;

and in a sensible manner, as it were, we acknowledge that our intellect and reason energize together with the former knowledge. But when this medium is confounded, because the harmony of the body is disturbed, then intellect and reason understand without an image, and intellection is carried on without imagination. Hence, intelligence may be considered as subsisting together with the phantasy, while, in the meantime, intelligence is something very different from the phantasy. Besides, it is easy to discover many speculations of men when vigilant, and worthy actions, in the performance of which it is evident that we do not perceive ourselves to speculate and act. For it is not necessary that he who reads should be conscious he is reading, especially when he reads with the greatest attention; nor that he who acts vigorously should acknowledge his vigorous energy; and the same consequence ensues in a variety of other operations, so that sensible animadversions appear to render more debile the actions which they attend; but when they (the actions) are *alone* they are then pure, and seem to possess more of energy and life. And hence when worthy men live in such a state, it follows that they live in a more perfect manner; since their life is not at that time diffused into sense, and by this means remitted in its energy, but is collected into itself, in one uniform intellectual tenor.

Nor are the wise man's energies entirely prevented by the changes of fortune, but different energies will take place in different fortunes, yet all of them equally worthy, and those perhaps more worthy which rightly compose jarring externals. The only difference indeed which fortune can effect in his energies is this, that in prosperity he will act *magnificently* and in adversity *magnaminously*. For the greatest discipline always resides with him, and this more so, though he should be placed in the bull of Phalaris. For what is there pronounced in agony, is pronounced by that which is placed in torment, the external and shadowy man, which is far different from the true man, who, dwelling by himself, so far as he necessarily resides with himself, never ceases from the contemplation of the supreme good.

But he who does not place the wise man in such an exalted intellect, but subjects him to the power of fortune and to the fear of evil, certainly presents us with a mixed character and life, composed from good and evil, and which possesses

nothing great, either pertaining to the excellency of wisdom, or the purity of goodness. Felicity, therefore, cannot consist in a common life; and Plato rightly judges that the chief good is to be sought from above; that it must be beheld by him who is wise, and wishes to become happy in futurity; and that he must study to approach to its similitude, and to live its exalted life. It is requisite therefore to possess this alone, in order to obtain the end of life; and the wise man will consider all besides as certain mutations of place, which in reality confer nothing to felicity. In every circumstance of being he will conjecture what is right, and act as necessity requires, as far as his abilities extend. To which we may add, that though he lives a life superior to sense, he will not be hindered from taking a proper care of the body with which he is connected, always acting similar to the musician, who cares for his lyre as long as he is able to use it; but when it becomes useless, and ceases any longer to perform the offices of a lyre, he either changes it for another, or abstains entirely from its exercise, having an employment independent of the lyre, and despising it lying near him, as no longer harmonious, he sings without its instrumental assistance. Yet this instrument was not bestowed on the musician from the first in vain, because it has often been used by him with advantage and delight.

JEWELS

And this Wisdom will be unto him a companion on a journey, and at home, in every place and at all times, an unfailing light in darkness, a pleasant friend with whom to converse, an exceeding delightful guest in time of silence and of leisure, and an inward unction that sootheth every trouble. —*Gerlac Peterson*

* * *

That very highest, bare, formless and unchangeable Truth abideth in the highest part of my spirit and sheweth unto me its ineffable riches, which cannot be compared with anything at all: namely, the one simple Word, in Whom all things are contained.

* * *

—*ibid.*

The lower region, that is the region of the senses, is full of unrest, disturbance and conflict, and therefore one ought with all one's strength to hasten on to the higher region and condition of soul.

* * *

—*ibid.*

Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

—*Francis Bacon*

ISLAMIC PRAYER

I. THE UNIVERSALITY OF PRAYER

Every religion which the world has known has recognized the necessity of Prayer. From the very earliest dawn of time man has turned to God in every difficulty, as simply and naturally as a child turns to its parents, when the serenity of life is disturbed. It is upon this simple faith and perfect trust that Prayer is based.

When through kindred interests men are drawn together at certain periods and in specific localities, the efficacy of collective prayer quickly becomes evident, and certain formulas necessary for the joint celebration of the Glory of God are given to the world by inspired Teachers and Prophets. These become sanctified by their association and hallowed by continued use, and soon take an important place in the religious life of a people, so that they are deserving of the respect and veneration of all men.

The more these prayers, which have been long and devoutly used, even when they are celebrated by races widely separated in time and location, are studied, the more will they be found to have both a universality of appeal and a unity of essence. Prayer is the loving submission of man to his Maker, and even as there is only one God, so all true prayer is directed to Him and to none other. He may be called by many names, but He remains the Unity of all Unities towards which man for ever aspires.

Christian devotions are centred in the Lord's Prayer. When the disciples said to Jesus "Lord teach us to pray," He taught them: "When ye pray say—'Our Father Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.' " Our Father Abides Eternally in Heaven; it is that His Kingdom may come to be realized on Earth that we pray, realized in us His creatures who have proceeded from Him according to His Will. When we conform to the Divine Law we return again to Him, Who is the Kingdom the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

There is a Hebrew Daily Prayer the opening words of which are: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, My God! The Soul which Thou hast placed within me is pure." This also is hallowed by the long usage of devout worshippers, and it

also testifies that the Soul is from God, that unto Him it returns, and that in consequence we should bless and venerate the Lord.

The Buddhists have a formula of prayer known as The Triple Refuge*, which begins: "I take refuge in and follow Buddha as my Guide." This they repeat every day, directing their veneration and their thoughts not only to Buddha as an historical personage, but also, and more particularly in the Mahayana Buddhism, to Buddha as the Eternal Personification of the One Divine Principle.

How exalted also is the following prayer of Zoroaster: "With bended knees, with hands outstretched, I pray to Thee my Lord. O Invisible Benevolent Spirit, vouchsafe to me, in this hour of joy, all righteousness of action, all gentleness of speech, all wisdom of the Good Mind, that I may bring joy to the Soul of Creation." Here, as in all great prayers, the little self is, as it were, lifted up to conscious union with the Great Self.

It is, however, with Islamic Prayer that we are now more particularly concerned.

II. SALÁT OR PRAYER IN ISLAM

Prayer, according to the Koran, is the only way by which man may commune with God or Allah. If we love God it is reasonable that we should wish to commune with Him, and Prayer gives us our opportunity. If we love human beings it is but natural that we should wish to be near to them, and so in an even greater and fuller measure should this be true in our desire to express our love for God.

In most religions a day is set apart for rest and prayer, a Sabbath, a holy day; and although Islam particularly venerates Friday (the day on which Muhammad first entered the sacred city of Medina, and also the day on which, according to the teachings of the Koran, Creation was finished) yet they do not cease work on this day, but only during a certain portion of the afternoon, when there is a service which all are supposed to attend.

The Muslims, however, probably devote more time to prayer than do the devotees of any other religion, for five periods of every day are set apart for the worship of Allah.

* See the article on "Mahayana Buddhism, III—Theology," Shrine of Wisdom, Vol. VIII, No. 30, page 196.

They claim that the body needs to be fed oftener than once a week, and that spiritual food is more necessary and important than physical food! Therefore each day they pray at the following times:—

1. *Morning Prayer*—After dawn and before sunrise.
2. *Early Afternoon Prayer*—When the sun begins to decline.
(This extends until the next prayer.)
3. *Late Afternoon Prayer*—Just before sunset.
4. *Sunset Prayer*—Just after sunset.
5. *Early Night Prayer*—When the red glow in the west disappears.
(Its time extends until midnight, but it must be said before going to bed.)

There are also two optional prayers: the *Late Night Prayer*, which may be said after midnight or before dawn, after being refreshed by sleep, and the *Breakfast Time Prayer*.

The *Azan*, or Call to Prayer at the Mosque, is proclaimed in a loud voice that all may hear. The Crier stands with his face to Mecca, which to Islam symbolizes the centre of the spiritual world, and his hands are elevated the while to the sides of his head with the palms forward—

“Allah is great! Allah is great!” (he chants)

“I bear witness that there is no other God but Allah!
I bear witness that Mohamet is the Prophet of Allah!

Come to prayer! Come to prayer! Come unto salvation!

Allah is great! Allah is great!

There is no other God but Allah!”

In the call to *Morning Prayer* there is inserted between the last two lines, the injunction to the slothful: “Prayer is better than sleep,” which is repeated twice!

Wherever one of the faithful may be at the time of the *Azan*, he is directed to listen to it with becoming reverence, and if he should happen to be walking he is expected to pause respectfully. He should also reply to the call by saying to himself: “Here am I awaiting the invitation of God.”

Preparation for Prayer. There are carefully detailed instructions as to ablutions of the uncovered portions of the body, the Prophet himself declaring that those who thus purified themselves before prayer, would at the Day of Resurrection have faces, hands and feet shining with all the brightness of the moon at its full.

When water is unobtainable, and it is well to remember that many Muhammadans are desert dwellers, a ceremony called *Tayammum* is performed in its stead, which is a purification by earth. The devotee first says: "By this act which I substitute for ablution, may my body be cleansed from all impurities." He then lays his open hands in pure earth or sand, shakes them and passes them over his face, and also each hand over the back of the other.

Islam is very wise in its attitude towards prayer. It teaches that there are those who pray without working, and that at the other extreme there are those who work without praying, but that each is incomplete without the other, for it is necessary both to work and to pray.

In practice it is difficult to divide work and prayer, for every important undertaking should be begun by asking God's blessing upon it, and even the work itself is a kind of prayer; but God, having given man certain powers, will not do the work which man is able to do for himself, therefore it should be man's first and foremost endeavour to accomplish the ends of his high resolve according to God's Laws, but as far as possible by his own exertions, being careful to consign the fruits of his labours to God, the Giver and Receiver of all gifts.

The Prophet taught his followers many prayers, and he recognized their importance as a means of lifting the Soul out of the world of the senses so that it might come to live in the World of the Real.

The Prophet is recorded to have said: "The coolness of my eyes is in prayer." In this he made a beautiful comparison, for the physical eyes, tired by the heat of the sun or scorched by the hot winds from the desert, are refreshed by cooling water or an evening breeze; the eyes of the Soul, tired by looking too long upon the world and its ways, find a cooling refreshment in prayer.

The Ritual of Muslim prayer is so complicated and involved that without the aid of lengthy descriptions or diagrams it would be almost impossible to explain it completely. A short outline is here given as a setting to the prayers themselves.

A prayer carpet is usually employed and the worshipper stands upon it facing Mecca and says: "I offer my prayers this day to Allah with a sincere heart."

He then says: *Allah-u Akbar!* (Allah is great), places his left hand on his breast, covering it with his right hand, and prays:

"To Allah who fashioned the heavens and the earth, being upright, I have truly turned, for I am not of those who worship with a divided heart. My prayer, my life, and my death they are truly devoted to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. He alone is Supreme, and I follow and diligently submit to the Law Divine. O Allah! Thou art the King, there is no God but Thou."

Or he may use the following prayer as an alternative:

"Glory to Thee, O Allah! and Thine is the praise, and blessed is Thy Name and exalted is Thy Majesty, and there is none to be served besides Thee. I betake me for refuge to Allah."

Although only one of the two foregoing prayers is used, the next prayer is always said. It is the opening *Sura* or first Chapter of the Koran, more often used in Islam than any other prayer, and deservedly so, for it is of great beauty.

"In the Name of the Most Merciful Allah. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds! The Compassionate, the Merciful! King of the Day of Judgement. Thee only do we worship; to Thee do we cry for aid.

Direct us in the straightest path, in the path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, with whom Thou are not offended, who go not astray."

This is followed by the prayer entitled "Unity."

"He, Allah, is ONE; Allah the Eternal; He begets not, neither is he begotten; nor is there any one like unto Him."

The worshipper then bows in adoration of the Divine Glory placing the hands upon the knees, saying: "I praise the Holiness of Allah."

Again he stands erect saying: "Glory be to Allah, hear Thou my praise, and grant me Thy Protection."

He then prostrates himself, the toes, knees, hands and forehead touching the ground. While in this position he says three times: "Glory to Allah, the Most High." He then sits in a reverential posture.

The foregoing, or certain portions of it, may be repeated by the worshipper, or it may be varied in numerous ways by offering prayers for the Prophet, for the faithful or for himself.

And cast not thine eyes upon the vanities of the world, the splendours of this present life, for the sustenance of Allah is better and more abiding."—XX.

"The Angels who bear the Throne, and they who encircle it, celebrate the praise of Allah and believe in Him, praying for the faithful saying: 'O Lord Thou encompassst all things in Thy mercy and knowledge; therefore protect those who turn to Thee and follow Thy Path. O Lord, lead them also into the Eternal Gardens as Thou hast promised, for Thou art All-mighty, and All-wise.'"—XL.

"O ye true believers! When ye are summoned to prayer on Friday, the day of the Assembly, hasten to the thought of Allah, leaving behind you the things of the world, for this is the true way.

But when the prayer is ended ye may return again to the world in the quest of the bounties of Allah, yet even here remember Him, saying: 'That which is with Allah is better than the things of the world.'"—LXII.

"O thou enfolded in thy mantle,
Arise to prayer and continue therein during the night—
The half, or deduct therefrom a little, or add thereto,
And with measured voice intone the Koran,
For we shall deliver to thee weighty words.
Verily the oncoming of the night
Is the time best suited for devotions and for ordered speech,
For in the day time there is long employment.
Remember thou the Name of Allah;
Separate thyself unto Him, renouncing worldly vanities.
Lord of the East and of the West!
No God there is but He!
Take Him for thy Guardian."—LXXIII.

"Praise the Name of the Lord Most High
Who all things hath balanced and created
According to a pattern, and with destinies to unfold.
He bringeth forth herbage,
And then withereth it again.
Recite the revelations of the Scriptures
And forget not the Law.
Felicity is attained by him who is purified by faith
And by him who remembereth the name of Allah in Prayer.'"—LXXXVII.

He then says: *Allah-u Akbar!* (Allah is great), places his left hand on his breast, covering it with his right hand, and prays:

“To Allah who fashioned the heavens and the earth, being upright, I have truly turned, for I am not of those who worship with a divided heart. My prayer, my life, and my death they are truly devoted to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. He alone is Supreme, and I follow and diligently submit to the Law Divine. O Allah! Thou art the King, there is no God but Thou.”

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The foregoing, or certain portions of it, may be repeated by the worshipper, or it may be varied in numerous ways by offering prayers for the Prophet, for the faithful or for himself.

All Muslims, who reach mature age are expected to observe the five daily prayers, but those who travel may dispense with all but two, if their journey is for three days and three nights or longer, and those who are ill and cannot stand easily may pray in their beds.

Islam is of unwearying fervour in its praise of Allah, and there are ninety-nine Divine Names by which He is celebrated. This is not, however, in any sense polytheistic, for all are the names and attributes of Allah the One God, Who is beginningless and endless, the Incomparable, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

III. PRAYERS FROM THE KORAN

The following prayers from the Koran have been selected for their intrinsic Goodness, Truth, and Beauty rather than their warnings to avoid evil, error or ugliness.

The Koran, like other sacred writings, has its descriptions of sin and hell, and it may be necessary to consider them occasionally in order to be able to recognize and know the inordinations which are to be avoided, and as a warning to the ignorant and foolish; but too great an insistence upon negation raises up a cloud of darkness, causing religion itself to be considered gloomy, instead of man's highest joy.

The more we lift up our thoughts to the Glory of God, admire the wonders of His perfect Cosmos, and study the marvellous potentialities and the possibilities of unfoldment of our own immortal Souls, the more we realize that negation and so-called evil is the work of man and man only, when he turns away from God, but that it is in no circumstances *necessary* for man to choose wrongly, nor is this choice ever forced upon him, and the Koran, like other sacred scriptures, testifies that man always possesses freedom of choice.

It is sometimes helpful to look at God through the eyes of our fellow human beings of a different race and time. It broadens the mental horizon, makes for tolerance and understanding, and hastens the day when the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God will be realized in all its fullness.

The prayers which follow are such that the devotee of any religion may find in them food for thought, and a confirmation of the truth which is expressed in his own manner of worshipping God, for although the details may differ the Central Unity of all religions is the Same.

“ Praise be to Allah, Maker of the Heavens and the Earth!
Who employeth the Angels as messengers,
With pairs of wings, two, three, and four.
He increaseth in creation what He pleaseth,
For Allah hath power over all things.
He giveth or withholdeth according to His Will:
He is Mighty, Wise.
O Men, remember ye the favour of Allah:
Is there any Creator besides Him,
Who nourisheth you with both earthly and heavenly food?
There is no God but Allah.”—XXXV.

“ Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth.
His Light is as a niche in which there is a lamp
encased in glass—like unto a blazing star;
It is lighted from a blessed tree—the olive,
neither of the east nor of the west, the oil of
which almost giveth light, though not enkindled!
Light upon light.
Allah guideth to His light whom he pleaseth.
Allah setteth forth parables for men.
Allah knoweth all things.”—XXIV.

“ O my son, be constant in prayer, distinguish right
from wrong, and bear patiently that which befalls thee,
for this is thy duty.

And turn not thy face from men contemptuously, neither
walk the earth with insolence, for Allah loveth not the
arrogant.

Be moderate in thy pace, and speak softly, for unmusical
is the braying of asses!

He who submits himself wholly to Allah, being a worker
of righteousness, grasps a firm handle, for unto Allah is the
issue of all things.

If all the trees upon the earth were fashioned into pens,
and all the seas were ink, and seven more like unto them,
the words of Allah would not be exhausted, for he is Mighty,
Wise. Allah is TRUTH.”—XXXI.

“ Glorify Allah by praise before the rising of the sun, and
before the setting thereof, and during the hours of the night
do thou glorify Him also, likewise at mid-day, that thou
mayst be pleasing unto him.

And cast not thine eyes upon the vanities of the world, the splendours of this present life, for the sustenance of Allah is better and more abiding.”—XX.

“The Angels who bear the Throne, and they who encircle it, celebrate the praise of Allah and believe in Him, praying for the faithful saying: ‘O Lord Thou encompassest all things in Thy mercy and knowledge; therefore protect those who turn to Thee and follow Thy Path. O Lord, lead them also into the Eternal Gardens as Thou hast promised, for Thou art All-mighty, and All-wise.’”—XL.

“O ye true believers! When ye are summoned to prayer on Friday, the day of the Assembly, hasten to the thought of Allah, leaving behind you the things of the world, for this is the true way.

But when the prayer is ended ye may return again to the world in the quest of the bounties of Allah, yet even here remember Him, saying: ‘That which is with Allah is better than the things of the world.’”—LXII.

“O thou enfolded in thy mantle,
Arise to prayer and continue therein during the night—
The half, or deduct therefrom a little, or add thereto,
And with measured voice intone the Koran,
For we shall deliver to thee weighty words.
Verily the oncoming of the night
Is the time best suited for devotions and for ordered speech,
For in the day time there is long employment.
Remember thou the Name of Allah;
Separate thyself unto Him, renouncing worldly vanities.
Lord of the East and of the West!
No God there is but He!
Take Him for thy Guardian.”—LXXIII.

“Praise the Name of the Lord Most High
Who all things hath balanced and created
According to a pattern, and with destinies to unfold.
He bringeth forth herbage,
And then withereth it again.
Recite the revelations of the Scriptures
And forget not the Law.
Felicity is attained by him who is purified by faith
And by him who remembereth the name of Allah in Prayer.”
—LXXXVII.

“ Consider the Sun and his illumination!
 The Moon and her reflected light!
 The Day when it revealeth his glory!
 The Night when all is veiled!
 The Heaven and its fashioning!
 The Earth and its extension!
 The Soul and its perfection!
 Its inspiration and its power of choosing!”—XCI.

“ Allah the Beneficent hath taught the Koran
 He hath created man and given him the use of reason;
 And the Sun and the Moon to measure the seasons,
 And the plants and the trees which bend in adoration.
 He elevated the Heavens and set the balance
 That in the balance ye should not transgress.
 Weigh therefore aright and scant not the balance.
 And the earth he hath prepared for living creatures;
 Therein are fruits, and palms with sheathed clusters,
 And grain with husk and fragrance.
 He created man out of earth or clay.
 He created djinn (angels) from a flame of fire.
 He maketh fresh water to mingle with the salt,
 Yet between them is a barrier they cannot overpass.
 From the sea come forth pearls both great and small
 And here also are ships towering aloft like mountains.
 All the earth shall pass away,
 But the face of Allah, resplendent with majesty and glory,
 Endureth for ever.”—LV.

JEWELS

Let knowledge grow from more to more
 But more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mind and soul according well,
 May make one music as before.

—Tennyson

* * *

He who is in the Fire, and He who is in the Heart,
 and He who is in the Sun, are all One and the Same,
 and he who knows this becomes one with the One.

—Maitrāyana Upanishad.

FRAGMENTS OF AMMONIUS SACCAS

From "On the Nature of Man" by Nemesius

II. ON THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH BODY *

"We must now investigate how the union of the soul and an inanimate body arises. Ammonius Saccas solved the question in this way.

He said that intelligible things have such a nature that, when they are united to the things which are able to receive them, they are not changed like corruptible things, but remain distinct and indestructible, just like things which are laid side by side. With respect to bodies, union with each other changes them entirely, because they are changed into other bodies, just as simple elements are changed into compound bodies, nourishment into blood, blood into flesh and the other parts of the body. As to intelligible natures, union may arise, but there is no change of essence as a result: for an intelligible thing, by reason of its nature, does not change its essence; it either departs or vanishes into non-existence, but its nature does not admit of change. Nor is it corruptible into non-existence, for in this case it would not be immortal. The soul, being self-vital, if it were changed in the mixture or union, would be different and no longer vital. But what advantage would the soul be to the body, unless it supplied life to it? The soul therefore is not changed essentially in the union. Thus, it having been demonstrated that intelligible natures are immutable in essence, it necessarily follows that they do not perish with the things to which they are united. The soul is intimately united to the body, but yet remains totally distinct. That it is united to the body, sympathy with the body shows; for the whole sympathizes with itself as one being—that it remains distinct is evident from the fact that in a certain way the soul can withdraw from the body in sleep and, leaving it lying like a corpse, the body only preserving in itself the breath of life, in order that it may not wholly perish, it acts by and of itself in dreams and approaches intelligible things. The same thing happens when the soul by and of itself apprehends any intelligible nature: for then as much as possible the soul separates itself from the body, and isolates itself, in order that thereby it may rise to the

* The first article of this series appeared in No. 32.

knowledge of real beings. For being incorporeal it separates itself from the whole body as from things which are wholly corruptible, but yet remains indestructible and distinct and, preserving its own unity, changes the things wherein it abides by its own life and yet is not changed by them—just as the sun by its presence makes the atmosphere luminous; the light is united to the air, and yet the sun at the same time remains distinct and unmingled. So, in the same way, the soul, although united to the body, remains absolutely distinct, differing from the sun, however, in this—that the sun being a body and circumscribed by place, is not itself everywhere that that its light is. But the soul, being incorporeal and uncircumscribed by place, passes as a whole both through its own light and the whole body wherein it is, and there is no part lighted by it in which it is not totally present: for it is not dominated by the body, but dominates the body. Nor is it in the body as in a jar or a bag, but rather the body is in it: for intelligible natures are not hindered by corporeal, but enter, penetrate, and pass through every body, and cannot possibly be restrained by corporeal place—because since they are intelligible, they are in intelligible places: for they are either in themselves, or in intelligible natures which are above. Thus then as the soul is in itself when it reasons, so it is in Intellect when it contemplates. And when it is said to be in the body, it is not said to be in the body as if it were in a place, but to be, as it were, in a certain relation to the body, and to be present to it in such a way as God is said to be present in us. For we say that the soul is bound to the body by a certain relation or habitude, inclination and disposition, as the lover is bound to the object of his love: not corporeally nor locally, but by their relation. For since the soul is an essence without size, magnitude, or parts, it is superior to any place circumscribed according to parts. As it has no parts, in what place could it be enclosed? Place is co-existent with magnitude, for place is the boundary of that which contains, inasmuch as it holds that which is contained. If anyone should say, then my soul is in Alexandria and in Rome, and everywhere, he does not notice that he really says “place” again: for the words ‘in Alexandria’ and ‘here and there,’ or ‘everywhere,’ designate place. But the soul is nowhere in any respect as in a place, but only in a certain relation; for it has

been demonstrated that it cannot be enclosed in a place. Whenever therefore an intelligible nature is said to be in relation to some place, or thing which is in a place, we are guilty of an abuse of language in saying that it itself is there, because as a fact only its activity is there—we assuming the place for the relation and the activity of it. To speak accurately we should say, 'it acts there,' not that 'it is there.' "†

Ammonius Saccas here indicates one of the fundamental difficulties which has to be overcome in all expositions of the nature of the soul. The human intelligence, unless it has undergone a training in abstract and philosophical reasoning, cannot understand the true nature of the soul, because, since all its conceptions are qualified by the concrete and the material, it endeavours, even unconsciously, to understand the soul itself in terms of things qualified by materiality and extension, and hence confusion of thought results. But when the dialectic reason is fully energised, there follows the direct perception or intuition (noesis) of abstract and spiritual reality and the knowledge of the soul itself, as distinct from its vehicles and activities, is attained.

† The English translation of these fragments is based on that by Helen M. Johnson published by the late Prof. T. M. Johnson, the American Platonist.

EDITORIAL

We are pleased to announce that, owing to the response which our readers have made to the appeal for support of the Shrine Manual Fund, Manual No. 9, "A Synthesis of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ," is now in the Press, and will be published at an early date. Several other manuals are ready and will be published as funds are available; and we therefore once more appeal to all our readers to continue to give the Manual Fund their fullest support.

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Volumes IV-VI of "The Shrine of Wisdom," bound together, with Index, in blue cloth with gold lettering, are now available. Both the bound volume, the price of which is £1 5s., and also Manual No. 9, "A Synthesis of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ," price 3s., may now be ordered from The Secretary, "The Shrine of Wisdom," Lincoln House, Acacia Road, Acton, W.3.